2023

CV

DR. Yonas Beyene GEBREMICHAEL

Paleoanthropologist

Yonasbeyene.gm@gmail.com

Email:yonasbeyene.gm@gmail.com

Personal Statement/ Work experience: Dr. Yonas Beyene Gebre-Michael has contributed to the understanding of the early human technologies and biological evolutionary history based on his paleoanthropological research in Ethiopia for the last 35 years. He has also contributed to the recognition and preservation of bio-cultural landscapes in Ethiopia. He led the project that discovered and published the world’s earliest Acheulean technologies dated to ~1.75Ma from the Konso-Gardula area (KGA) in Southern Ethiopia. He was also among the team of scientists that discovered many new paleoanthropological areas in Ethiopia among which are Konso (KGA), Fejej and Kessem Kebena sites. He is the principal archaeologist for the Middle Awash research team. Together with colleagues, he discovered, analyzed and published very important scientific data. In addition to that he initiated the Fejej and the Konso-Gardula research programs, and made excavations in the ~2Ma sediments and discovered Oldowan (Mode I) artifacts and associated humans. Further to that, he co-initiated the Chorora paleontological research program with colleagues, a program that resulted in the discovery of 8 million years old ape species called *Chororapithicus abysinicus,* which may be the root species that gave rise to the present day gorillas*.* Results that culminated from his and colleagues’ research works are published in scientific journals since 1992. Dr. Yonas Beyene has also taken part in several Museum and interpretation activities in Ethiopia and abroad. He has participated in more than 30 international professional meetings and presented scientific papers.

In addition to the above, he had lectured “African Archaeology” course at the Addis Ababa University graduate program for 10 years and advised several students. He had also held a position of visiting professor at Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) in 1996 and taught African Prehistory at the Institut de Paleontologie Humaine (IPH) in Paris, France.

Dr. Beyene had represented Ethiopia in the World Heritage Committee at UNESCO between 2009 and 2012 during which time he had advocated for the recognition and protection of natural and cultural sites of great importance. He had also initiated the nomination of the Konso Cultural Landscape on UNESCO’s World Heritage list (nominated in 2011) and led the research team in the field and played the main role in writing the Nomination File and the Management Plan. Again recently he led the field research and write up of the Dossier, and the process for the nomination of the “Gedeo Cultural Landscape” for UNESCO’s World Heritage List (file is due for decision by the WH Committee in 2023).

Education: Dr. Yonas Beyene joined the University of Addis Ababa in 1978 and graduated in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. He then joined the National Museum of Ethiopia in 1982 as Historian/ Conservator. This opportunity had opened to him the venue for a new experience leading to the study of prehistory. In 1986, through a French Government scholarship he travelled to France where he began his graduate studies in Quaternary: Geology, Human Paleontology and Prehistory at the Institut de paleontology Humaine, Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle, in Paris, France. After earning his D.E.A. and A.E.A. in 1987, he embarked up on his Ph. D in Prehistory which he earned on January 29, 1992 with great distinction (Tres-Honorable) in summa cum laude. He then went to the University of California, Berkley and the University of Indiana, Bloomington to pursue his Post-Doctoral research.

Achievements and Affiliations: Dr. Yonas Beyene returned to Ethiopia in 1992 to resume research activities in paleoanthropological sites he co-discovered with colleagues and to work for the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture. While working for the Ministry, he was head of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Archaeology and Paleontology, Director of Research Laboratory and Conservation for more than 20 years (in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century). During this period many new scientific discoveries that led to better understand the human biological and cultural evolutionary history were made in Ethiopia; and he was part of a good portion of this breakthrough. In 2011, he was entrusted with the task of organizing a new University called “Wolkite”, as its Academic and Research Vice President; for which after few years, he was assigned to serve as its Management Board Member.

Currently, Dr. Yonas is a full time researcher in paleoanthropology based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He has research space in the Ethiopian Heritage Authority (EHA) research laboratory and is affiliated with the French Center for Ethiopian Studies (CFEE) in Addis Ababa. He is actively leading and co-leading paleoanthropological research programs in Konso-Gardula, Middle Awash and Chorora research areas.

Dr. Yonas Beyene is fellow of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) since 2014 and International member of the American Academy of Sciences (NAS); and now Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) since 2022. He is recipient of the “Palm Academy” from the French Ministry of Education, France for his contributions to Science and culture. He is also Corresponding Member of the Institut de Paleontology Humaine (Paris, France) and Center for Academic Research and Training in Anthropogeny (CARTA), UC San Diego, USA.